



Rumours to be open longer for finals week snack attacks

— Page 4

Condon's Ags to take on UT in Austin Saturday night

— Page 9



Texas A&M The Battalion

Vol. 82 No. 73 USPS 075360 12 pages

College Station, Texas

Friday, December 13, 1985

2 die in plane crash at Easterwood Airport

Jet becomes 'fireball' after take-off

By SCOTT SUTHERLAND
Assistant City Editor

A business jet crashed in what witnesses called "a fireball" Thursday night at Texas A&M's Easterwood Airport killing one pilot, a passenger and critically injuring another pilot.

Harry Raiser, airport manager and director of aviation, said the plane was attempting to take off from runway 28 when the accident occurred.

The plane slid for about 800 yards, narrowly missing marker lights in the infield of the airport.

Witnesses at the airport said the plane was about 30 feet off the ground when they began to see sparks trailing behind the plane.

Then there was an explosion, after which the jet crashed to the ground.

They also said the plane, which belonged to the General Telephone Company, was engulfed in flames as it slid across the airfield to a fence that marks the airport's boundaries.

Keith McKnight, a junior wildlife, fisheries and science major, reported seeing an explosion that lit up the sky at about 7:15 p.m.

Bob Wiatt, director of security and University Police at A&M, said the dead pilot was identified as Jerry LaBoid, 43, who was a resident of San Angelo.

LaBoid was a former Bryan resident, and Wiatt said his parents still live in Bryan.

Also killed was Susan Teters O'Rear, 39, a GTE employee in San Angelo. O'Rear was traveling back to San Angelo when the crash occurred and was in Bryan-College Station on business.

Wayne Melvin Short, 47, also of San Angelo, was critically injured in the crash. Short remains in intensive care at St. Joseph Hospital in Bryan.

Wiatt said it wasn't clear whether Short or LaBoid was flying the plane when it crashed.

Emergency personnel worked frantically to rescue Short and pulled him from the wreckage at about 8:15 p.m. The heavy rains had turned the airfield into a swamp and rescue crews temporarily were unable to reach the scene with an emergency vehicle.

Police and firefighters used portable generators to power spotlights, so they could see inside the twisted wreckage.

The plane's fuselage was resting upside down, but the tail section was intact and upright. The right engine was severely burned and the intake section of the engine had been bent into a mushroom shape.

Raiser said that from looking at the damage to the right engine, he believes it could have burned or exploded internally.

When reporters were allowed to view the wreckage, firefighters were trying to disassemble the left engine, which had managed to remain intact despite the force of the crash.

Warning signals still could be heard beeping from the cockpit, and the bodies of the victims and the injured pilot lay immobile on the ground.

Firefighters said there was no fire when they arrived shortly after the crash and that the bodies didn't appear to be burned.

Debris was scattered across the

taxiway. The nose piece rested in the middle of the taxiway with control wires dangling outside it.

The scattered debris and the jet fuel that spilled on the runways caused airport officials to close the airport shortly after the crash.

All flight arrivals and departures were canceled after 7:30 p.m., including commercial flights.

Wiatt said University Police would guard the wreckage until officials from the Federal Aviation Administration arrived to investigate this morning.

Chuck Cargill, vice-president of operations, said the airport would probably remain closed until about 9 a.m.

Weather at the time of the crash was described as good and wasn't believed to be a factor in the accident, Cargill said.

Jim Thompson, a GTE spokesman, said the plane, a Lear Jet 35, was used at night primarily as a cargo plane. During business hours the plane flies GTE executives on business trips.

During cargo flights, the seats are removed unless there is a passenger and the plane is loaded with GTE cargo and mail, he said.

Several GTE boxes were scattered among the debris.

Thompson said in 30 years of flying various aircraft, the company has never had an accident like this one. He described the plane as well-maintained and said it had not had any major maintenance problems before.

Thompson added that the pilots were well-trained and experienced.

He said the plane, which is hangared in San Angelo, makes the cargo runs five to six days a week depending on weather conditions.

He wasn't certain exactly when the plane left the San Angelo airport but said it usually leaves around 6 p.m.

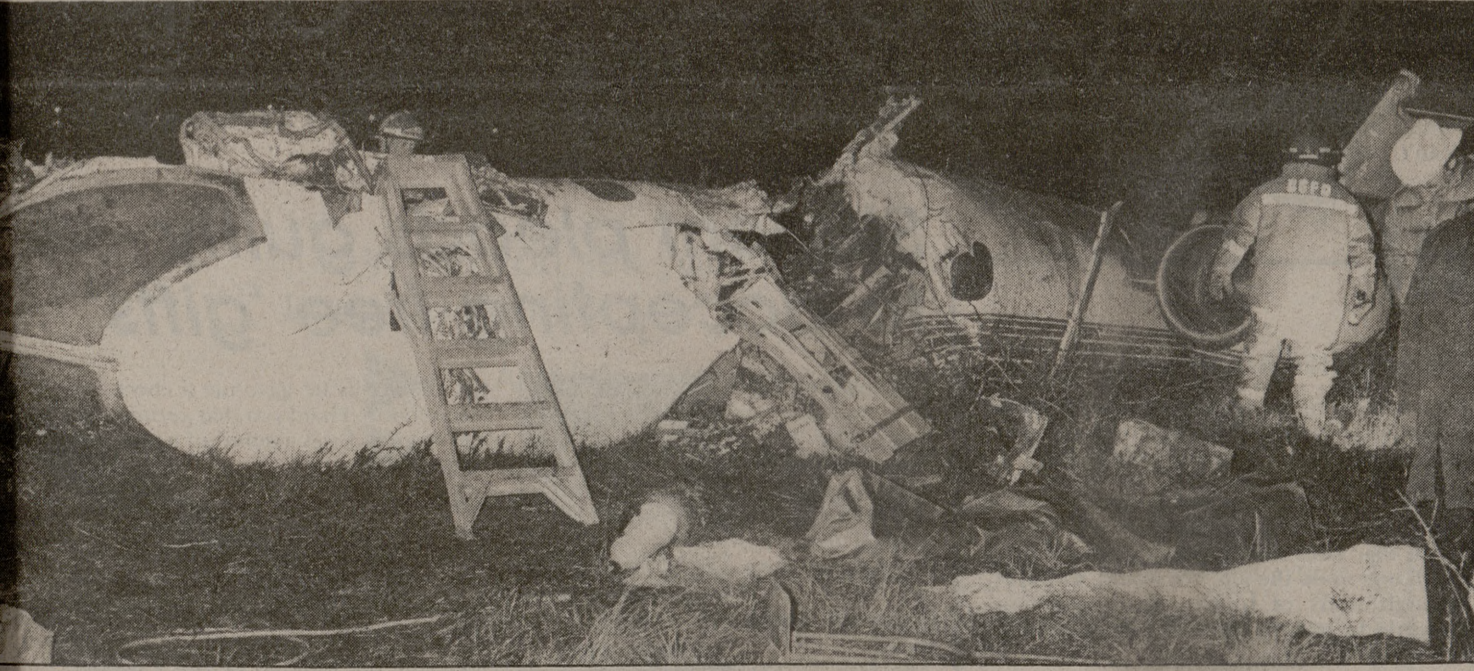
The plane was scheduled to make a stop in Austin before dropping cargo and picking-up O'Rear at Easterwood.

From Easterwood the plane had planned stops in Houston, Victoria and Corpus Christi before returning to San Angelo Thursday night.



Photos by ANTHONY S. CASPER

Two people were killed and one critically injured Thursday when a Lear Jet 35 owned by the General Telephone Company crashed at Texas A&M's Easterwood Airport.



258 die in crash of DC-8 military charter in Newfoundland

Associated Press

GANDER, Newfoundland — A DC-8 charter full of U.S. soldiers returning from the Middle East crashed and exploded Thursday near Gander International Airport, killing all 258 aboard and scattering bits and weapons across snow-covered woods.

Families and friends learned of the disaster as they assembled for a mass-band welcome at the headquarters of the 181st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Cause of the crash, which occurred at 5:15 a.m. EST, remained under investigation, but the White

House said preliminary reports showed no indication of sabotage or an in-flight explosion in history's eighth-worst aviation disaster.

The charred cockpit voice and flight recorders were recovered and will be taken to Ottawa for analysis, said Peter Boag of the Canadian Aviation Safety Board, who was directing the investigation.

The charter flight operated by Arrow Air of Miami carried members of the 101st Airborne who were being rotated home after six months service in the multi-national peacekeeping force in Egypt's Sinai peninsula.

Military authorities said it might take a day or two to notify all the next-of-kin, as long as a week to positively identify remains.

Canadian Broadcasting Corp. television showed debris smoldering in the snow beneath tall evergreens in sparse, hilly woods where the plane went down about a half-mile from the runway near Gander Lake.

Airport manager John Pitman said the aircraft carried 101,000 pounds of fuel on takeoff.

Canadian Transport Minister Don Mazankowski said the plane climbed no higher than 1,000 feet before crashing.

Transport Canada spokesman Bruce Reid, returning from a helicopter tour over the site, said there was no suggestion that the plane exploded in flight.

"Where it came down," he said, "it obviously exploded on impact. Everything in the area is charred."

The Canadian government sent 15 investigators to the scene, according to Dave Owen of Canada's Accident Safety Bureau.

At Fort Campbell, base commander Maj. Gen. Burton D. Patrick told a news conference an Army

team would help transfer remains from Newfoundland to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, where identification of the bodies could take up to a week. A temporary morgue was established at the airport, Boag said.

In Washington, White House spokesman Larry Speakes said initial reports indicate "no evidence of sabotage" or an explosion in flight.

Maj. Larry Icenogle, a Pentagon spokesman, said the troops all embarked in Cairo. He said it was possible that some of the victims might not have been attached to the 3rd Battalion of the 101st Airborne, "but

we believe all of them were attached to the 101st."

He said the unit's weapons were carried in the cargo hold.

Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Vedder Steed in Atlanta, Ga., said Arrow Air was among more than 400 airlines whose operations were the subject of a 1984 FAA probe.

Neither the FAA nor Arrow Air could immediately provide details of the investigation, but Arrow Air spokesman Robin Mattell in Miami told The Associated Press the airline "is in good standing with the FAA."

Low-power stations

Station manager says FCC sweeping LPTVs under rug

By JENS B. KOEPKE
Senior Staff Writer

The perils of a new industry have left their mark on TV-5, a low-power music television station that has been on the air in Houston since July 12.

"The Federal Communications Commission has created an industry that they now want to sweep under the rug because they don't know what to do with it," says Connie Wodlinger, owner of TV-5.

Wodlinger says the FCC created low-power television stations hoping to encourage new owners to get into the broadcasting business but that owner limitations and lack of financing have stifled the ability of LPTVs to succeed.

"The FCC philosophy sounded good when it was initiated, but the LPTV rules and regulations (on

power) are so limiting that, unless it is a very unusual situation, they (stations) can't be economically viable and won't survive and many of them haven't," she says. "So in order for that idea (FCC philosophy) to survive and to allow the industry to survive, not even flourish, the power would have to be increased and I don't foresee that happening."

LPTV stations are limited to 10 watts on a VHF frequency and 1,000 watts on a UHF frequency.

Wodlinger says she was awarded a construction permit in July 1984 after winning a lottery with about 30 other applicants. It cost \$3 million to set up the station, whose equipment is almost equivalent to a full-power station, Wodlinger says.

The station uses a mass-appeal contemporary hit format in choosing its music videos, says Mike

Opelka, TV-5 program director.

Wodlinger says, "My own opinion is that the only place an LPTV has a chance of being commercially viable and surviving is in a major city, where you can cover enough population to be viable. We felt that in Houston, even with limited power, we had the potential to reach a lot of households."

Because the LPTV industry has no history, many financial institutions are unwilling to lend money to investors interested in building an LPTV station, Wodlinger says.

"Most of the construction permits have been granted to people that they (FCC) had originally intended — those who have not been in the business — but their dreams of owning a TV station have been somewhat dampened, when they've been faced with the reality of very limited

coverage and a property that can not be financed by a bank," Wodlinger says.

Although programming on LPTVs is regulated less stringently than on FPTV stations, she says, "Someone has to see your programming for it to do you any good."

LPTV programming is covered only by fairness doctrine and obscenity provisions, while FPTV stations must present balanced viewpoints in public affairs programming that is responsive to the problems in their community of license.

To overcome the problem of coverage, TV-5 announced on Nov. 12 that it will become Hit Video USA, a national satellite network, beginning in December.

"There are very few industries

See LPTVs, page 8

Hansen, Caperton to speak to grads

By JEANNE ISENBERG
Reporter

Texas A&M University System Chancellor Arthur G. Hansen and State Sen. Kent Caperton will deliver the commencement addresses at two separate ceremonies tonight and Saturday at G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Hansen, who will be leaving his job as chancellor next year, will speak to graduates tonight at 7:30 for undergraduate degree recipients in the colleges of agriculture, business administration, liberal arts and geosciences. Students and graduate students of Texas A&M at Galveston also will receive their degrees tonight.

Hansen says he will be speaking about the necessity to re-examine old ideals and values so

that they can be molded to better fit the present age.

These years are a time of rapid social change, he says, and society is in need of this set of ideals to guide it through ethical and moral dilemmas. The new graduates of A&M are well-equipped to formulate such values to establish personal direction and a new direction for our country, he says.

"In years to come," Hansen says, "we would hope that each graduating Aggie could look back over these years and be able to say, 'I have kept the faith and been true to the high principles that were implanted during my years at Texas A&M.'"

Caperton will speak to Satur-

See Hansen, page 8